

Policy for Moderator of Session of a Vacant Church

in the Presbytery of Wabash Valley

Updated: October 28, 2014 - Draft

A. Relevant Citations

The *Book of Order* describes this role as follows:

G-3.0104 Officers

The pastor of a congregation shall be the moderator of the session of that congregation. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall both be considered moderators and have provisions for designating who presides at a particular meeting. If it is impractical for the pastor to moderate, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.

The moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the body. He or she shall convene and adjourn the body in accordance with its own action.

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G-3.0201 Composition and Responsibilities

The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are entitled to vote. The pastor shall be the moderator of the session, and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provisions for a moderator. Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.

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B. Appointment

When a particular church becomes vacant, the Presbytery authorizes the Commission on Ministry (COM) to appoint a moderator from among the Presbytery's PC(USA) members in good standing as follows:

- A Teaching Elder;
- A Commissioned Ruling Elder serving another congregation;

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- A Ruling Elder who has previously served as moderator of Presbytery or of a Presbytery Commission.
- A Ruling Elder deemed by COM to have had sufficient training.

Between meetings of COM, the Presbytery authorizes the Moderator or Vice Moderator of COM to appoint moderators for one Session meeting, subject to review at the next COM meeting.

A Teaching Elder or Commissioned Ruling Elder serving as pastor of a particular congregation (temporary or installed) shall be the moderator of the Session and may appoint a moderator from the above list when needed if the pastor is unavailable for a particular meeting.

C. Duties

The moderator:

1. Presides at all regular and called meetings of the session and congregation, seeing that the requirements of the *Book of Order* for such meetings are fulfilled and actions of the congregation are reported to the COM as needed.
2. Confers with the clerk of session prior to each meeting regarding a docket.
3. Assists session members between meetings by phone or electronic media.
4. Leads the session to ensure maintenance of the ministry and worship of the church, including regular services of worship, education, organization, stewardship, and whatever is usual and needful in the life of the church.
5. Ensures that the Sacraments are celebrated regularly and properly under the direction of the session.
6. Sees that decisions of the session are assigned so that they will be carried out.
7. Works with the session to ensure that pastoral care is provided to members of the congregation.
8. The moderator of a vacant pulpit provides a quarterly report to COM describing progress toward obtaining stable leadership and other significant ministry actions.

D. Relationships

1. The moderator presides over and counsels with the session when preparing recommendations for the selection of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).
2. The moderator may preside over the meeting of the congregation when the PNC is elected and when it makes its report.
3. The moderator should refer the PNC regarding questions of policy and candidate selection to the Transitional Care Coordinator or to the COM.
4. The moderator cooperates with the COM.
 - a. The moderator represents the interests of the Presbytery to the ongoing life of the church.
 - b. The COM may invite the moderator to meet with the COM to discuss matters

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concerning the particular church.

E. Compensation

An appointed moderator (other than the pastor of the congregation) shall be paid a minimum of \$100.00 per month, plus mileage (vouchered to meet at least IRS minimum guidelines).

1. If the session does not meet or require any moderatorial services during a given month, no payment need be made.
2. If there is more than one meeting requiring the presence of the moderator in a given month, the moderator will be paid a minimum of \$25.00 for each additional meeting plus mileage.
3. If a moderator is serving as interim or in another temporary pastoral role, compensation will be considered to be part of the terms for the position.
4. An individual invited to moderate a meeting of the congregation should be paid a minimum of \$25.00 plus mileage.

F. Revisions

To assist other congregations who may face similar circumstances in the future, please forward all concerns, comments, and/or suggestions about this document to COM@ourpresbytery.org.